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*A Vision for the Application of the Army Learning Concept 2015
in Noncommissioned Officer Education*



I. Purpose. The purpose of this paper is to provide the NCO community with an overview of the application of the Army Learning Concept 2015 (ALC 2015) to NCO leader development. This paper does not replace the ALC 2015, Army Leader Development Strategy, or other TRADOC concepts; however, the paper does provide a consolidated perspective on how recently published concepts may affect the Noncommissioned Officer Education System (NCOES).

II. Background. The Army Concept Framework provides the vision for the development of the future force. The Army Capstone Concept (ACC) serves as the foundation for a series of documents that includes the Army Operating Concept (AOC), six functional concepts aligned with warfighting functions, and three concepts focused on the development of Soldiers, leaders and organizations. These documents guide efforts to identify and develop the requirements necessary to create the future force. In addition to the concepts, the Army leader Development Strategy (ALDS) describes the characteristics that the Army desires in leaders throughout their careers and the guiding strategy to build those characteristics. Together, the concepts and ALDS provide the theoretical guidance that will drive when, where, and how the Army develops leaders in the 21st century.

Recent and projected changes in operational environments (OE) indicate that Soldiers at every rank and echelon handle more complex situations than in the past. Leaders and Soldiers constantly adapt to changing tactical, operational, and strategic conditions as well as an adaptive enemy. The complexity of the OE coupled with the need to execute decentralized full spectrum operations in a variety of cultures drives the ever-increasing learning demand placed on Soldiers. If the Army will prevail in future wars, Soldiers and leaders must not only master the fundamentals, they must also learn and adapt faster than our adversaries change.

In order to meet the growing learning demands, TRADOC examined factors in the learning environments where Soldiers and leaders grow. That assessment showed the Army has not taken advantage of advances in cognitive psychology, learning science, and educational technology to improve what, when, and how Soldiers learn. The combination of current and projected changes in the OE, changes Soldier characteristics, and changes in learning science make it evident that the Army needs an updated approach to Soldier development. The ALC 2015 describes the learning model the Army will use by 2015 to develop its Soldiers and leaders during an era of persistent conflict. A career-long continuum of learning that involves a combination of self-development, institutional instruction, and operational experience remains the centerpiece of the Army's approach to learning; however, the ALC 2015 suggests some significant changes are necessary to achieve an adaptive learning system that will develop the Army throughout the 21st century.

III. 21st Century Soldier Competencies. Analysts reviewed ACC, AOC, ALDS and other doctrinal guidance in order to derived desired Soldier competencies. While the training system will remain largely task-based, the competencies represent broader sets of skills that are necessary to enable task performance within the context of complex operational environments. Unlike many tasks that have discrete performance standards and a definitive end to the performance, the competencies are broader skills with



performance outcomes that change as a Soldier progresses through a career. These competencies are the basis for revising Soldier and leader career maps and drive the need for a lifelong learning approach to leader development.

Concurrent with the development of the ALC 2015, INCOPD developed a framework of NCO roles and competencies to guide future revisions of NCOES. The “NCO 4 by 6” articulates four roles and six core competencies that every NCO must master to effectively lead Soldiers and execute the Army’s missions.



Figure 1. The NCO 4 by 6

The four roles are not new for the NCO Corps. Learning in the institution, unit and self-development domains must create NCOs that lead, develop and care for Soldiers in ways that are consistent with the traditions of the NCO Corps and the Army profession. Continuous development of the six competencies throughout the career of an NCO is necessary to ensure the NCO Corps is able to execute the four roles in any operational environment.

Outcomes for each competency serve as the basis for constructing the lifelong-learning curriculum and adjusting existing career maps. The outcomes described below are the starting point for examining the NCOES curriculum, identifying strengths, gaps, and planning future revisions to NCOES.



Professional Competence. NCOs employ appropriate tactical and technical skills in full spectrum operations to accomplish the mission and support the commander's intent. NCOs are experts on weapons systems and combined arms operations at the tactical level and train their subordinates to be tactically competent as well. They are technical experts in their occupational specialties and continue to develop technical skills in themselves and in their subordinates. As NCOs progress in their careers, they focus less on technical skills and place more emphasis on a broader set of leader/operational skills.

Problem Solving. NCOs solve complex problems by using work and life experiences, training and education, critical questioning, and collaboration. They provide opportunities for subordinates to develop problem-solving skills, especially proficiency in critical thinking and creative/adaptive thinking. While NCOs are trained to use problem-solving models, they are also trained in critical thinking – evaluating their thought processes as they solve problems. With respect to creative/adaptive thinking, NCOs recognize when a standard procedure is not an effective solution to a situation and when they must generate novel ideas to solve a problem. As NCOs develop, they are comfortable operating in unexpected situations, scanning the environment, identifying unique or unexpected conditions, and adjusting plans, procedures, etc. to effectively handle those conditions.

Learning. Learning competencies involve both self-learning and instructing others. As self-learners, NCOs know when they need to learn and use methods that help them efficiently and effectively acquire new knowledge and skills. In helping others to learn, NCOs construct instructional environments and train and coach Soldiers in acquiring "how to" knowledge and skills to achieve work goals. NCOs understand the fundamentals of how to help Soldiers learn and the technologies that they can leverage to improve the efficiency and effectiveness of training and education. The NCO is a self-directed/motivated learner who creates an environment of continuous learning and demands both he and his subordinates exceed their comfort zones. He is skilled at adapting his mentoring approach to encourage and guide subordinates in setting and achieving goals. As a mentor, the NCO has open and honest discussions with his Soldiers, and provides a proper mix of opportunities at the right time for them to grow.

The Profession (Professional Military Ethic). NCOs develop, maintain and uphold the traditions of the profession through discipline and ethical application of combat power. NCOs develop understanding and application of the seven Army Values throughout their careers - loyalty, duty, respect, selfless service, honor, integrity, and personal courage. The Warrior Ethos and NCO Creed serve as the basis for his/her actions and emphasizes service to Soldiers and the nation. NCOs exemplify the professional Soldier by demonstrating military expertise, trust and character while fulfilling their duty to their Soldiers and the nation.

Comprehensive Fitness. NCOs develop and maintain their physical, emotional, social, family, and spiritual fitness and foster these attributes in their subordinates. NCOs display physical, mental and emotional persistence when faced with adverse conditions, as well as resilience in recovering from difficult situations.



Team Building. NCOs create high-performing groups by leading and motivating individuals and by partnering to effectively work towards common goals. NCOs understand team dynamics and take appropriate action to foster cohesion and cooperation. Two key components of team building include communicating successfully and demonstrating effective social skills. NCOs express themselves clearly and succinctly both orally and in writing, and use social skills that allow them to work effectively with other Soldiers and civilians in varied cultural contexts. NCOs are sensitive to socially behavior patterns and beliefs of individuals from other communities/countries.

The outcomes for each competency provide the goals that we seek to achieve across the three leaning domains, institutional, unit, and self-development. The next step is to examine how to achieve those goals.

IV. Key Tenets of NCO Learning in 2015. The ALC 2015 describes the Continuous Adaptive Learning Model that fosters development of the 21st Century Soldier Competencies with instructional strategies, expert facilitators, and technologies that support learners. In this section, we highlight key aspects of the Continuous Adaptive Learning Model (from the ALC 2015) and their potential impact on NCOES. When viewed together, we believe these characteristics provide the foundation for the future NCOES learning environment. The description of each aspect contains a brief overview of the current institutional domain followed by an explanation of changes we envision.

Learner-centric. Training and education institutions historically invested a great deal of effort in preparing the learning environment from the perspective of the instructor. For the Army, that translated into creating standardized training support packages delivered in a similar fashion by a cadre of instructors that serve as the focal point of instruction. Our review of numerous NCOES lessons and observations of NCOES classes shows that most of our classes are a lecture or discussion format where the instructor delivers knowledge to Soldiers. This approach to learning still has value; however, recent research in learning science shows that passively receiving information is not the most effective way to learn. Another problem with this approach is that instructors are assuming that the Soldiers in the class all need the same amount of information to reach the learning objectives.

In contrast, a learner-centric approach recognizes that each Soldier enters the learning environment with a unique set of knowledge and experiences that impact what they need to learn in order to achieve the desired performance outcomes. Learning is more effective when students actively participate in learning activities that require them use new knowledge to work through scenarios that they may face. Instructors serve more as facilitators guiding the learning experiences of Soldiers and adjusting the learning activities in order to challenge Soldiers. Facilitators view the learning experience from the Soldier's perspective and adjust learning activities in order to maximize the development of each individual. Each Soldier still achieves the required performance outcomes; however, this approach acknowledges that there will be varying degrees of performance above the minimum standard. Each Soldier should be challenged to surpass the minimum and achieve the greatest growth possible form the learning experience.



Assessment driven learning. Measuring the skill and knowledge of each individual is a key component of any learning environment. Our current instructional system assumes that every Soldier should receive the same instruction regardless of prior learning or experience. The learning cycle looks like Figure 2.

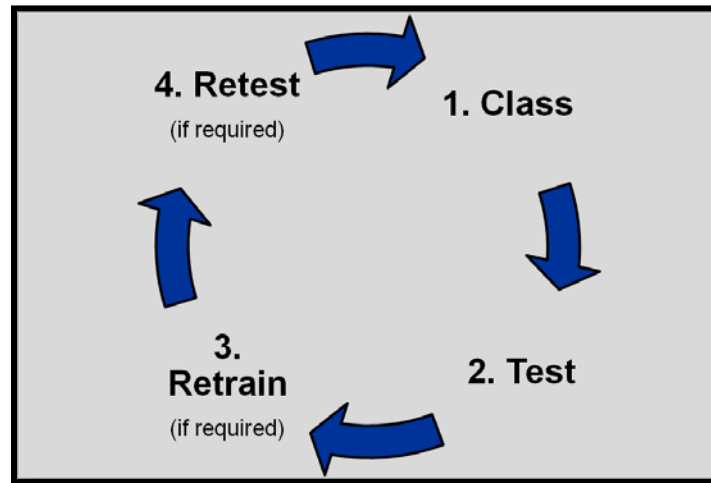


Figure 2. Current learning cycle.

In most cases, Soldiers demonstrate what they learned on an assessment (written test or performance test) at the end of the instruction. That means that many Soldiers are sitting through classes about tasks or topics that they already mastered. These Soldiers often help coach peers and rarely learn something new from the classes that they have already mastered.

Applying the learner-centric approach to assessment means that we should assess what Soldiers know about a task or topic before we decide what instruction they need (see Figure 3).

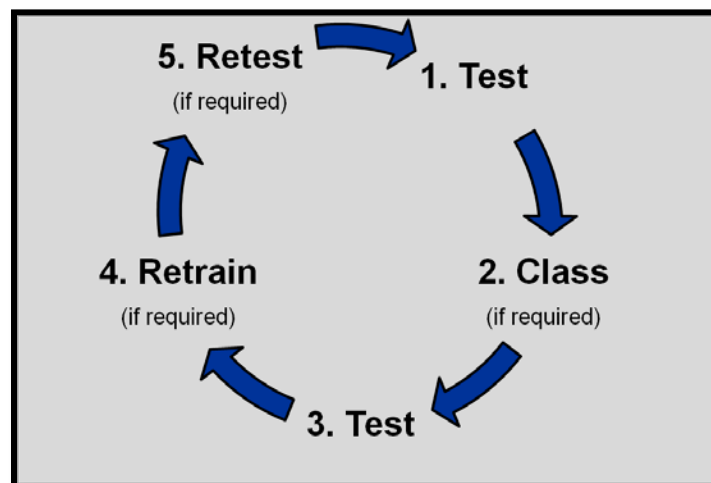


Figure 3. Learning cycle in 2015



Beginning with the assessment serves several purposes in the future learning environment. The assessment is a way to ensure that Soldiers have the prerequisite skills and knowledge that are necessary to benefit from instruction. Assessing first also gives Soldiers an opportunity to demonstrate that they have already mastered the content of the instruction. Therefore, the learning system either needs to give them more difficult challenges related to that topic of instruction or should allow the Soldier to advance to the next topic. First line supervisors and unit leaders may use assessment data to understand each Soldier's performance level. That data should help leaders make better decision about how to support individual development during unit training while also providing performance data for counseling and mentoring Soldiers.

Adaptive system. Our current institutional learning system permits very little variation in the conduct of each course. In some regard, that ensures that every Soldier receives similar instruction, but it forces Soldiers to sit through instruction that they may not need. This structure also makes it somewhat difficult to rapidly update course lessons. TRADOC has made significant progress in finding faster ways to integrate lessons learned; however, we have difficulty keeping courses relevant because of changes in the OE.

The adaptive learning system we envision in the future will provide Soldiers and training managers more flexibility. Starting the course or lesson with an assessment means that we need the capability to adjust the lesson based on the Soldier's performance assessment. For resident courses, soldiers that demonstrate mastery may be given the option of working on another topic or tackling advanced skills in areas where they already demonstrate proficiency. We envision using intelligent tutoring and adaptive systems in online learning to provide learning activities that challenge Soldiers based on their current performance level. The adaptive systems also need to have some flexibility for course designers and managers so that they are able to rapidly adjust the learning content and activities. In essence, the key aspect of this approach is providing relevant and rigorous learning activities for Soldiers that challenge them without being so difficult that the Soldiers will not be able to learn and succeed.

A third aspect of the adaptive system is that we need to provide more flexibility about when and where Soldiers achieve the desired learning outcomes. Soldiers should be able to select from multiple options to achieve any given learning outcome. For example, A Soldier that needs to improve communication skills may have the option of working with a mentor in his unit, completing college courses, completing Army eLearning or civilian online courses, or attending some resident instruction at an Army school. Some of the learning activities may be formally scheduled; however, the Soldier may also do many of these things at their own pace. While working with a unit mentor, they may choose to read online books or articles that they access using mobile technologies. We need to focus less on predetermined learning paths and shift our focus to allowing Soldiers to select the options that best fit their learning need and operational schedule. Our focus should shift to ensuring that soldiers reach the desired learning outcome and away from focusing on how they attain that outcome.



Lifelong learning. The Army has promoted lifelong learning for many years and recent changes to NCOES have been consistent with promoting the development of skills and knowledge throughout a career. The challenge with our current approach to learning is that the institutional, unit and self-development domains are not well connected. Soldiers spend the majority of their career learning in the unit. Career maps are available to guide Soldiers to learning experiences in each domain that are relevant to their career development, but the career map may not provide enough granularity to maximize the development of each Soldier. In the very near future, we will provide professional development modeling via the Army Career Tracker (ACT).

As we consider the lifelong curriculum for NCOs, we believe we need to begin with clearly articulating the performance outcomes for the four roles and six competencies. The broad descriptions provided in this paper serve as the baseline for developing measurable outcomes at each performance level. Once those goals are established, then our training developers can re-map learning activities that will help each Soldier achieve those performance outcomes. The main difference in this approach is examining the development of each competency horizontally across the career so that each learning activity deliberately builds on previous learning and experience. Figure 4 depicts a sample of that approach applied to communication skills.

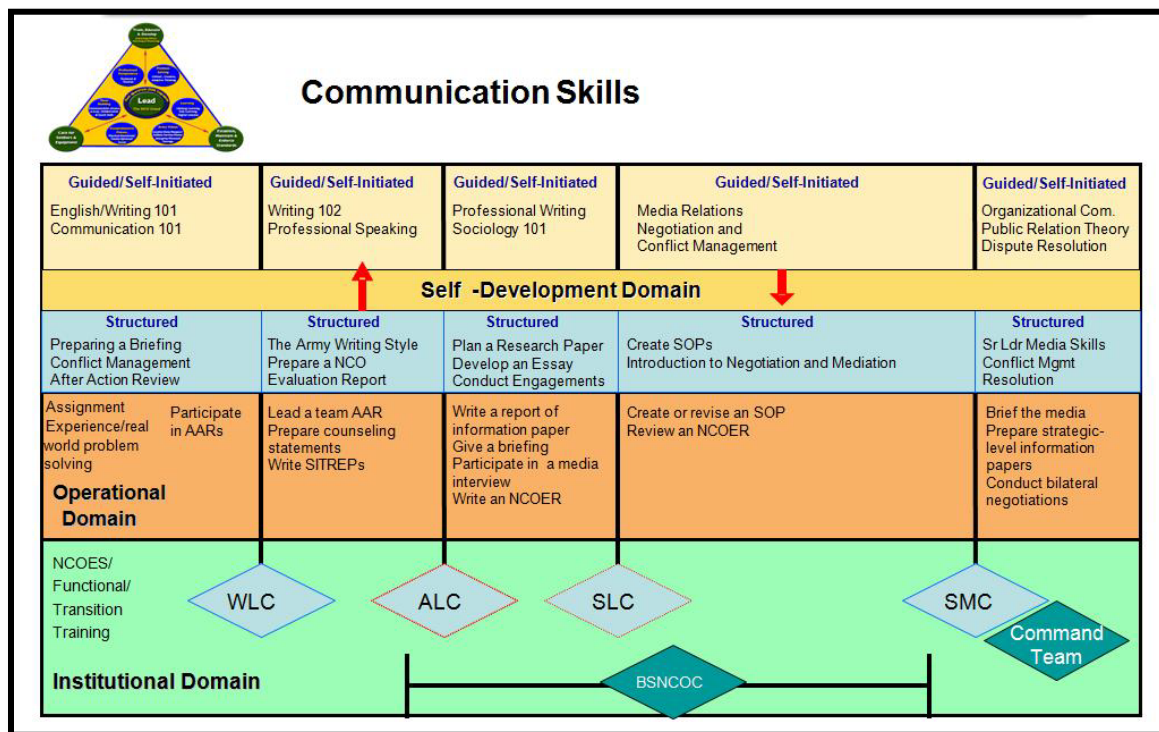


Figure 4. Sample learning map

The adaptive learning system that we envision for the future will use data from assessments and Soldier performance to drive the learning experience of each Soldier. To the degree feasible, Soldiers will



experience customized learning paths and activities that grounded in the evidence-based instructional practices that are proven effective. Coupling these aspects with a lifelong learning curriculum should enable us to improve the relevance and rigor of learning for each Soldier without overwhelming them or putting them in a position where they are not able to succeed.

What NCOES may look like in 2015. Figure 5 depicts a notional model of the lifelong learning curriculum for NCOs. This figure depicts many of the changes that are already ongoing in the transformation of NCOES.

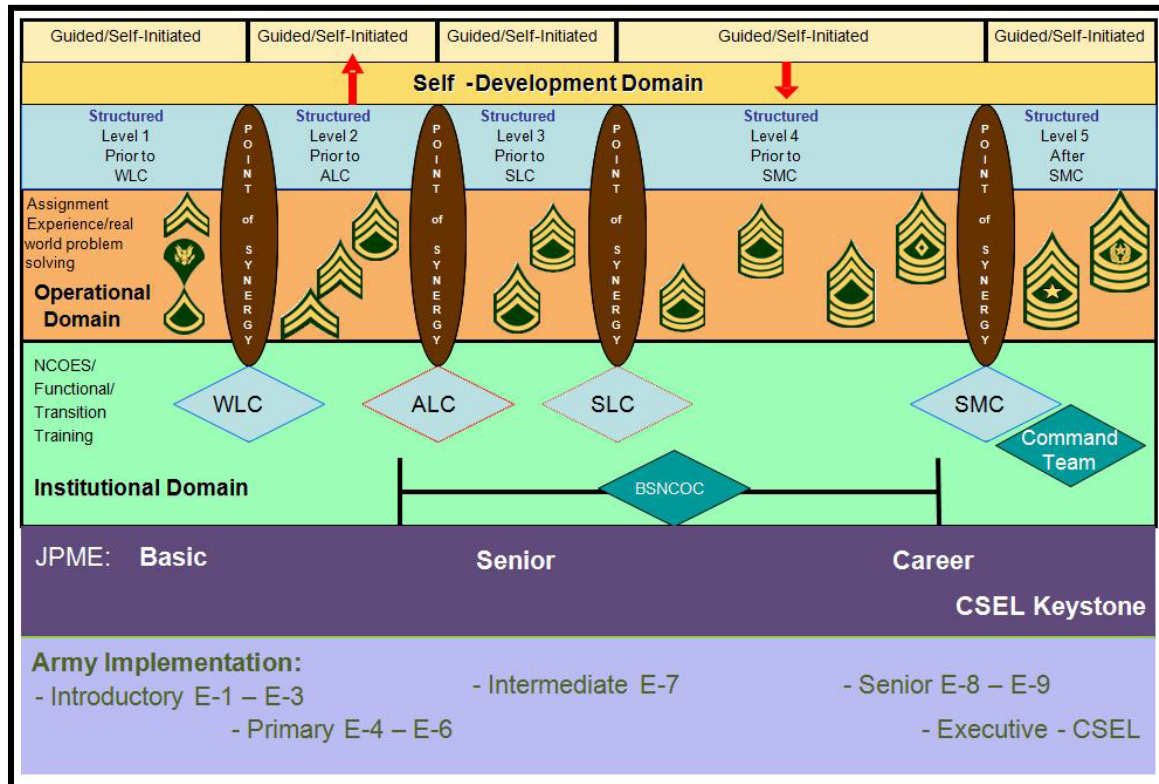


Figure 5. Sample Lifelong Learning Curriculum

We created a short vignette that describes the learning experience that we hope to create in the future to illustrate many of the key ideas discussed in the paper.



SSG Smith Plans Soldier Development

SSG Smith is an 11B who just began his seventh year in the Army. SSG Smith deployed twice to Iraq and will finish his second deployment to Afghanistan in three months. SFC Boone, his platoon sergeant, was hit by an IED last month and it looks like he will not return to the unit before they redeploy. SSG Smith has been serving as the platoon sergeant and is thankful SFC Boone invested so much time in mentoring him. The platoon is performing well, completing missions, and staying safe. His leaders have recognized SSG Smith's performance and he hopes that his performance may help him with the next promotion.

His mission for today was cancelled, so SSG Smith decided to spend some time planning for the development of his Soldiers when they return to Fort Carson. SSG Smith logs onto the Army Career Tracker (ACT) and instantly gets a reminder that he needs to finish SSD3 before he is eligible to attend the Senior Leader Course. He also notices that the system is recommending that he complete several self-assessments that may help him get more college credit for his recent experience as a platoon sergeant. He can quickly see all the learning activities that he has completed since AIT and how his progress measures against his career map.

SSG Smith notices that he has achieved at least an 80% rating on most of most of the competencies, but is only has a 40% rating on digital literacy. He selects that competency and reviews his last evaluation that shows he needs to improve his skill with DTMS and CPOF. The assessment also showed that he needs to get better at interpreting and evaluating information from the Internet. The assessment report has a suggested list of activities that he can complete to improve those areas. The recommended activities include books that he can read online in Books 24 X 7, online courses that are available from the Army learning portal, and college classes available from the college he is attending for his bachelor's degree. SSG Smith decides that he may have a few hours each week during the next two months to improve this competency. He decides that the best option for his schedule will be to read a couple books and complete a course for CPOF. He downloads the books to his smart phone, enrolls for the online CPOF course. SSG Smith sends the CPOF course facilitator an e-mail informing them he is deployed and may need additional time to complete some of the activities because of the mission schedule.

Now he turns his attention to planning the development of his squad leaders. He remembers when SFC Boone sat down with him two years ago and they began to map out his career. At the time, the career tracker was just getting started and they had to do most of their planning manually. Now, he can view each Soldier's training records and experiences in the career tracker. That helps him mentor each Soldier and ensure they are spending time on self-development. As a squad leader, SSG Smith used the career tracker each month as he prepared for and conducted monthly counseling for his Soldiers.



SGT Gray has been a squad leader for the entire deployment, but was only recently promoted to SGT. SSG Smith can see that SGT Gray completed WLC two years ago and already finished his associate's degree through the College of the American Soldier program. That means that SGT Gray is well on his way to becoming a SSG, but SSG Smith needs to help him plan a learning path that will maximize his growth during their reset period. The career tracker shows SGT Grays' performance on each competency, the mandatory training that SGT Gray needs to complete, and recommended learning activities to improve each competency. The immediate concern is that SGT Gray needs to complete a self-assessment to determine if he needs to complete portions of or the entire Advanced Leader Course (ALC) common core. The self-assessment will also help determine the best learning activities that SGT Gray should complete during the resident phase of ALC. SSG Smith uses the career tracker to send SGT Gray a message that reminds him to complete the assessment by the end of the week.

The following week, SSG Smith and SGT Gray meet for a counseling session. They review SGT Gray's performance on the assessment. SGT Gray performed well in many areas, but needs some improvement in communication skills before he can attend the resident phase of ALC. Both Soldiers really appreciate that the system ensures that they will have the skills they need to be successful prior to beginning a course. SSG Smith sees that there are several options for SGT Gray. Because SGT Gray is already enrolled in the degree completion program, he has the option of taking a college class or the communication module in the online common core. In either case, at the end of the instruction, SGT Gray will complete another assessment to ensure he has met the communication competencies that are required to attend ALC. Because SGT Gray also specializes in weapons maintenance, the system is showing the he is eligible to attend training with the manufacturer of a new weapon system that the unit will receive during their next refit. SSG Smith and SGT Gray map out a plan and learning activities that SGT Gray will complete over the next three months to ensure that he is eligible to attend ALC during their next reset phase. Because SGT Gray needs to improve communication skills, SSG Smith also develops a plan for how he can build those skills during mission planning and preparation. That will help SGT Gray use what he learns in the online courses and ensure that he develops his skills. SSG Smith uses the career tracker to view each Soldier's development, help each Soldier plan their career, and plan unit training activities that will develop each Soldier while still preparing the platoon to execute its assigned missions.



V. Ongoing Initiatives. TRADOC directed each center and school to implement the ALC 2015. Many efforts are already underway to change institutional learning at each proponent as well as initiatives that we are leading on behalf of the NCO Corps. Some of these initiatives were started several years ago as part of NCOES transformation and some are new actions that we started after the formation of INCOPD.

Army Career Tracker (ACT). ACT is an web-based Army leadership development tool that provides a single point of entry for career management and development for the Enlisted, Officer and Civilian cohorts, to include all three components (Active, ARNG and USAR), with a specific set of functionalities for each. ACT will pull information from training, education, and experiential learning sources and present a common training picture as well as a consolidated course catalog for all cohorts.

The system will allow users to search, see, understand, and act on the personalized information provided to them. Users will be required to select their first line leaders, who in turn, will be able to view critical data, make recommendations, and provide effective mentoring. ACT contains a Professional Development Model (PDM) that is personalized to the Soldier by matching up the Soldier's history to proponent approved career maps. ACT will use the PDM information to make targeted recommendations for future assignments, training, education and self-development. ACT supports implementing the ALC 2015 by allowing each Soldier to see a lifelong learning plan for their specialty, select an appropriate learning path, and receive feedback on their progress.

Structured Self-Development. SSD is mandatory self-development web-based training that continues throughout a Soldier's career and is closely linked to and synchronized with classroom and experiential learning. SSD is asynchronous and exists in four levels. It is supported by a robust assessment and feedback process that includes self-assessment tools, the increased use of advanced technology like the ACT, a secure test environment, achievable requirements, and policies that set the conditions for continuous growth. SSD is a centrally managed set of specified content that must be completed within specified career points as a prerequisite for attendance at Warrior Leader Course (WLC), Senior Leader Course (SLC), and Sergeants Major Course (SMC). SSD is both an individual and first line leader responsibility, executed at the individual's pace under the supervision of the first line leader.

The Army developed SSD to bridge the operational and institutional domains and set conditions for continuous growth and life-long learning for both the Warrior and Warrior Leader. SSD Program was implemented to the Army in October 2010. The Army adopted the American Council on Education (ACE) criteria to evaluate self-development materials for potential college credits. SSD is an example of many ideas in the ALC 2015 including lifelong learning, effective use of educational technology, and increasing Soldier access to learning.



College of the American Soldier (CAS). CAS is an enduring training and education partnership between the Army and participating colleges/universities focused on expanding existing civilian education support for Soldiers and leaders. This partnership will provide an optimum balance of training and education that accelerates Soldier and leader development and motivates Soldiers to stay in the Army while preparing for the future. The Army implemented a Career NCO Degrees Program available to all NCOs at any point in their career, with maximum credit for Army leadership schools based on completion of NCOES up to the Sergeant Majors Course (SMC). To date, CAS has partnerships with 27 colleges and universities, which will offer 15 associate and 45 bachelor degree programs. CAS is an example of one component of the future learning system that maximizes Soldiers' access to learning while also ensuring that Soldiers are developing the broad skills and knowledge necessary to handle the complex challenges of the OE. Integrating CAS into the NCO career map provides Soldiers another venue for relevant and rigorous learning described in the ACL 2015.

One Army School System (OASS). INCOPD initiated several projects that support the NCO Corps portion of OASS. We conducted a Total Army Training System Courseware (TATS-C) analysis of ALC and SLC courses to assess our progress toward ensuring that NCOs have access to training in NCOES courses that is equivalent for all components.

All of the Noncommissioned Officer academies that were under operational control of FORSCOM (e.g. Fort Hood) were transferred to help increase efficiency and effectiveness of the academies. This change was made to relieve FORSCOM of the institutional training requirement.

ALC 2015 describes regional learning centers as one of the goals for the future learning environment. Our academies already perform this function for WLC; however, we conducted a pilot to create a multi-component NCO academy (NCOA) to support training WLC for Soldiers at Fort Carson. The instructor cadre for the WLC is comprised of Soldiers from the active component, Army Reserve and Army National Guard and train Soldiers from all three components. This configuration maximizes our use of available training assets, increases training capacity, and improves the total force.

NCOES Needs Assessment. A key concern addressed in the ALC 2015 is the need for rigorous, relevant learning experiences led by expert facilitators. In FY09, INCOPD conducted an analysis to examine ways to improve NCOES. The assessment evaluated the quality of NCOES lessons and lesson implementation. The data from the assessment showed areas of training development and instructor performance that require improvement. Upon completion of the assessment, our team developed an action plan to address the performance gaps and started implementing the plan. We designed, developed and implemented a course to teach training developers evidence-based design practices that are consistent with how people learn. The course was for training developers and instructors from numerous centers and schools including the Sustainment Center of Excellence, Maneuver Support Center of Excellence, Signal center of Excellence, Center for Army Leadership, Defense Language Institute, and the Army Training Support Center.



As we move toward the goals of ALC 1015, it is clear that we will demand more from our instructors and facilitators. We recently designed and staffed a draft instructor development plan that we believe will serve as the blueprint for changing how we select, train and manage instructors. The plan describes instructor competencies for three levels of instructor certification, a training plan to achieve the levels, and an assessment program to measure instructor performance. Our current work will expand this to include a description of a recommended instructor selection process, instructor incentives, and program management. The end goal of this work is to create an instructor development program for NCOES instructors that transforms NCOs into expert learning professionals that are on par with the best trainers in the world.

VI. Future Work. Achieving the vision set forth in the ALDS and ALC 2015 means that we have significant work to do in other areas. The people that design, develop and implement the NCOES are our foundation. We have started investing more effort in training our training developers and instructors; however, we realize that we cannot underestimate the level of design expertise that is necessary to create the complex learning assessments and activities that we need to accomplish our goals. We must begin by doing a better job of selecting and managing the workforce. We will continue to invest considerable effort in developing programs to improve the expertise of our training developers and instructors. Our goal is to ensure that our workforce understands and applies evidence-based learning practices to create effective, efficient and engaging learning experiences for Soldiers.

Creation of more effective learning experiences also means that we need to improve the relevance and rigor of our courses and lessons. Challenging scenario-based assessments must challenge our NCOs to apply what they are learning rather than simply finding information in a field manual or regulation. NCOs need to continue to learn where and how to find the right information from doctrine and regulations, but we must take the next step and make sure that they are able to use that information to solve the kinds of problems that they face on the job. An increase in rigor also means that we must accept the reality that some Soldiers will not graduate an NCOES course on their first attempt. That should not be viewed as a failure of the system or the individual, but rather as recognition that the NCO has more development to do in order to reach the performance outcomes that we need in the force.

Implementing the ALC 2015 will require state of the art learning facilities for our NCOs. We conducted an assessment of NCOA facilities and are working with TRADOC and Army engineers to create a design standard for academies. We have also been successful in getting NCOA military construction projects move higher in the overall TRADOC military construction plan. We will continue to work toward ensuring that each NCOA has appropriate facilities to conduct effective training.



VII. Conclusion. Our Army and NCO Corps are engaged in multiple conflicts; our strategy must account for the current operational tempo and help Soldiers pace themselves; their development is not a sprint, it is a marathon! As we implement the ALDS and the ALC 2015, we must fully understand the challenges that face our NCOs. There is great potential in the use of advanced technology to improve our training and education activities. The use of gaming, mobile learning, and virtual world's 3D capabilities can greatly increase the complexity and relevance of the development of technical/tactical skills and leadership competencies. Today's technologies allow the rapid creation of realistic scenarios based on current operations and actual terrain to add complex real-time lessons learned into our development activities.

The core purpose and role of the NCO Corps remains unchanged, but the importance, level of complexity, and range of responsibilities have evolved in many areas. The development of our next generation of leaders will require an increased level of competence, the ability to learn, communicate, understand the context of operations, and solve complex problems. The INCOPD, USASMA, NCOAs and each NCO will play a critical role in achieving the vision. The NCO Corps must embrace a culture of lifelong learning that supports continuous growth and development through institutional learning, unit training and self-development. NCOs must value learning throughout their career and take advantage of the numerous learning opportunities that are available. Leaders at all levels must work with Soldiers to begin creating a new vision of transformation, and help Soldiers to understand the direction of the future. We are well on our way to creating the learner-centric adaptive system described in the ALC 2015 that will allow us to implement the ALDS.